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LETTER DATED 17 DECEMBER 1999 FROM THE SECRETARY-GENERAL ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

Pursuant to Security Council resolution 1244 (1999), I have the honour to convey the attached report on the international security presence in Kosovo covering the period 27 October to 23 November 1999.

I should be grateful if you would bring the report to the attention of the members of the Security Council.

(Signed) Kofi A. ANNAN

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Annex

MONTHLY REPORT TO THE UNITED NATIONS ON THE OPERATIONS OF THE KOSOVO FORCE

1. Over the reporting period (27 October-23 November), troops of the Kosovo Force (KFOR) continued their deployment into the theatre. At the end of November, there were approximately 48,000 troops in place.

2. Jordan, Morocco, the United Arab Emirates and Ukraine all completed their deployments during the period. Russian deployment into the town of Orahovac continues to be hampered, despite the removal of roadblocks around the town (see para. 6 below). Efforts towards a complete resolution of the problem are under way.

Security

3. The overall level of violence within the province continued to fall, although it increased again towards the end of the reporting period. Ethnically motivated violence has increased in intensity, as demonstrated by the bomb attack on the railway bridge in Kosovoska Mitrovica on 6 November, the mortar attack in the city of Pasjane on 7 November, and the arson attack on an Orthodox church in Cornja Zakut on 8 November. Arson attacks on property, particularly houses belonging to Serbs, have also continued. The security situation for the various ethnic minorities in Kosovo remains precarious, and the protection of minorities remains one of the highest priorities of KFOR. In this regard, KFOR troops represent a permanent presence in Serb towns, villages, neighbourhoods and even in individual houses. Checkpoints and patrols are organized in key areas to provide security and instil a feeling of confidence in the community.

4. There were several acts of intimidation against KFOR troops over the reporting period, although these were largely ineffective and appeared to be the result of small groups of individuals acting independently.

5. On 21 November, a police patrol in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia near the boundary with Kosovo was fired upon from a Serbian Special Police (MUP) boundary station within the Ground Safety Zone near the village of Prepolac, in Kosovo. Later that same day, in the same area, a Yugoslav police vehicle hit a mine that had been placed on the road. Two people were killed, and two others injured. Although there was no evidence that these attacks originated from inside Kosovo, KFOR troops intensified their normal patrolling activities in the boundary area in an effort to further enforce stability and security.

6. On 23 November, following successful negotiations initiated and supervised by the Commander of KFOR, the roadblocks surrounding Orahovac in Multinational Brigade (MNB) South were removed. However, the deployment of Russian troops into the area continues to be hampered.

7. KFOR continues to work closely with the United Nations Mine Action Coordination Centre (UNMACC) and other demining organizations in Kosovo, and increased efforts in mine awareness training have resulted in fewer mine

incidents. The focus of KFOR remains on eradicating the threat posed by Cluster Bomb Units (CBUs) and on clearing border-crossing sites. Residual caches of weapons continue to be discovered and confiscated throughout the area of operations. KFOR began the destruction of confiscated weapons on 15 October.

Cooperation and compliance by the parties

8. Over the reporting period, the provisional Kosovo Protection Corps (KPC), which came into being on 21 September, remained in broad compliance with the "Undertaking of the demilitarization and transformation of the UCK". The KPC, which will be a multi-ethnic civil emergency body, with no law enforcement role, completed its 60-day transition phase on 21 November. It still has only one official member, the designated Commander, Mr. Ceku. The final phase of the selection procedure for KPC members began on 22 November. Although a small number of minorities have applied, to date, there have been no Serb applications to join KPC.

9. On 12 November, the Commander of KFOR finalized the instructions for compliance for the provisional KPC and communicated these to its commander. These instructions cover the issuance of weapon authority cards to a limited number of KPC members, and describe how weapon cards, ID cards, uniforms, insignia and vehicles should be used.

10. Serb security forces continue to comply with the terms of the military-technical agreement and in general remain cooperative in their dealings with KFOR. Yugoslav Army units have been operating in the south of Yugoslavia near the Ground Safety Zone, but this is assessed as normal seasonal training, which will conclude with the onset of winter.

Cooperation with international organizations

11. KFOR continues to provide humanitarian assistance throughout Kosovo on a daily basis, focusing on transportation, food distribution and the protection and escorting of refugees and internally displaced persons. Increased KFOR support has been provided to the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in order to accelerate the delivery of shelter material to regional warehouses.

12. As of 23 November, the UNMIK police force numbered 1,809 persons. Responsibility for public security operations has been transferred from KFOR to UNMIK police in Pristina, Prizren and Mitrovica, although KFOR still provides troops for joint patrols. In addition, KFOR troops continue to patrol in all major urban areas and in the countryside in order to deter crime and instil a sense of personal safety in the population. KFOR also provides daily support to the Kosovo Police School, whose first graduates are now conducting on-the-job training with UNMIK police.

13. KFOR continues to provide 24-hour control and monitoring on the authorized border-crossing points with Albania and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia,[1] and provides security for the transportation to Pristina of the

customs duties collected at the border. KFOR will continue to attach high priority to monitoring cross-border movements into Kosovo.

14. KFOR continues to support UNMIK at all levels of the civil administration in Kosovo and is represented at the Kosovo Transitional Council and the joint civil commissions.

15. With respect to infrastructure, KFOR troops are still involved in such tasks as securing water supplies, power plant operations and manning fire engines. Commercial flights into Pristina were suspended on 20 November in response to an interim recommendation by the French Air Accident Investigation Board investigating the crash of the World Food Programme ATR-42 aircraft on 17 November.

Return of refugees and displaced persons

16. During the month of October, 4,000 refugee returns were organized, mainly from countries outside the Balkans.

Outlook

17. There has been no significant change in the security situation in Kosovo since the last report. Attacks against ethnic minorities continue to give cause for concern, and the potential exists for tension to escalate in areas of confrontation between the Albanian and Serb communities, such as Mitrovica. KFOR will continue to work in close cooperation with UNMIK to address these issues in order to maintain peace and stability.

Notes

[1] Turkey recognizes the Republic of Macedonia with its constitutional name.